

CHAPTER-V

CHARITIES AND ENDOWMENTS OF NAYAKS

The Magnificent temples in Tamil Nadu built by the Nayaks have a rich history dating back to their construction. They endowed temples with huge properties to ensure that the temples must not suffer from lack of funds.¹ Some endowments were meant for arhcakas and Poosaris for lighting lamps, providing garlands, carrying the Lord in procession, conducting festivals and for dancers and musicians to perform in temples.² Many devotees have endowed temples in the form of lands, buildings, gold, silver and many other precious assets for the maintenance of temples.³ Regulations were issued in the presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay in the years 1810, 1817 and 1827 respectively for supervision of temples and endowments.⁴ It provided for the appointment of local agents to oversee the expenditure incurred by the temples. After repeated representations by hindu leaders the regulation was repealed and was substituted by the Religious Endowments Act -1863 (Act XX of 1863) after a period of 46 years. This Act provided for the appointment of local committees to supervise temples. Members of this committee were appointed for life. This act was also found to be ineffective.⁵ After that, a series of

1. R. Nagaswamy, ***The Art and Culture of Tamilnadu***, Delhi, 1980, p.116.

2. K. Devaraj, ***Theriyatha Madurai Seithigal (in Tamil)***, Madurai, 1980, p.16.

3. W. Francis, ***Madurai District Gazetteer***, New Delhi, p.293.

4. Sidney Toy, ***The fortified cities of India***, London, 1965, p.62.

5. The Religious Endowment Act , 1863 **Act NO. 20 OF 1863**, 10th March, 1863.

enactments were made including section 92 of Civil Procedure Code 1908. Civil courts became the central agency in all temple related litigation. The process was slow and difficult. The temple administration with its vast resources had the advantage and often the litigant found it difficult to continue with the litigation. It was seen that many temple properties went into private hands.⁶ No documentation was maintained about valuable temple assets. Many private bills were introduced in the Madras Legislative Council and the Imperial Legislature seeking executive supervision of temples to prevent and redress abuses in the management of temples. The Justice Party pioneered the enactment of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act - 1927 which provided for the constitution of the 'Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Board' and provided for the appointment of Executive Officers to temples.⁷ There was a lot of opposition to this legislation from entrenched groups. The then premier of Madras Presidency, the Raja of Panagal – Sir Pananganti Ramarayaningar convinced the then Viceroy Lord Irwin and got his approval for the same. Subsequently, various Acts viz., Act 1 of 1928, V of 1929, IV of 1930, XI of 1931, XI of 1934, XII of 1935, XX of 1938, XXII of 1939, V of 1944, X of 1946, V of 1947 were enacted. The law commission in 1950 under the Chairmanship of Thiru. C.R.Das also mentioned that a number of citizens complained to the law commission about the misuse of funds and properties of temples and endowments.⁸ Although not within its purview the law commission

6. The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, **Act NO. 5 OF 1908**, 21st March, 1908.

7. Pinayur Ramanatha Aiyar, **The Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, Act II of 1927**, Madras Law Journal Press, Mylapore, 1927.

8. **Year Book of the International Law Commission** 1950, Volume-I, 1958, United Nations, New York.

suggested that a suitable enactment may be passed to regulate the misappropriation. The Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act - 1951 was enacted and provided for the creation of a Department of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments headed by a Commissioner and assisted by a hierarchy of officers. It had the power to regulate the secular affairs of Hindu temples and Mutts. The system of hereditary employees was abolished and the system of authority, duties and responsibilities at various levels were laid down.⁹ Many interested groups challenged the Act. After prolonged litigation in various courts, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the Act in the Shirur Mutt case but struck down certain sections of the Act. Finally, after repealing all the earlier enactments, The Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1959 was passed by the Tamil Nadu Government. Overall, charities and endowments play crucial roles in addressing societal challenges, promoting education, supporting healthcare, and contributing to the well-being of communities.¹⁰ Their impact can be significant in creating positive change and addressing the diverse needs of society. Religious endowments are established to promote religious activities, maintain temples, and support priests or religious leaders. These endowments are typically managed by Shebaites or Mahants, who are responsible for performing religious rituals and ceremonies.¹¹ Some examples of religious endowments include funds for the upkeep of a temple, funds for the

9. ***Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act***, 1951 (2[Tamil Nadu]. Act XIX of 1951), or in this Act, but subject to the provisions of section 75-C.,

10. ***The Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act***, 1959 (Tamil Nadu Act 22 of 1959).

11. R.Sharma Sastry (ed.), ***South Indian Inscriptions***, Vol.XIV, Delhi, 1941, No.3

maintenance of a deity, and funds for the welfare of the priests or religious leaders. Nayaks were known for their patronage. This was one of the manifold activities of Nayaks to temples.¹² The Nayaks of Madurai apart from their manifold activities on temples, were also known for bestowed charities and endowments to temples. They gave the endowments to temples in different forms. The prizes given to the temple also included embellishments made of gold and silver. The royal Indies of the royal family and other people made the most of the presents of embellishments for the temple. The donation of gold trimmings to the temple is documented in an engraving by Tiruvelvikkudi.¹³ Another box with Rudraksh dots and hooks is set with 55 daisies, 2 rubies and 2 sapphires retouched in Thiruparanam gold. Nayaks are also believed to be the one who lent gold treasure to the temple, but they held the title of Nayak and was actually the temple's royal accountant. The dedication of individuals was demonstrated by blessing the gods with rich decorations and many items necessary for daily worship, in the sixteenth century.¹⁴ The Nayak registers refer to the bestowal of 77 golden Kalanjus to the Gods, including four golden pats, golden floral ornaments and precious jewelry offered to the Gods. The section details the types of gold accessories and jewelry that were in the past given to various deities, with the majority of ornaments being given by kings and individuals within the royal family. Nayaks donated a silver plate, a pot, and a

12. R.Sathyannatha Aiyar, ***History of the Nayaks of Madura***, University of Madras, 1980, p. 37

13. ***South Indian Inscriptions*** ,Vol-VI,No.132/1916

14. ***South Indian Inscriptions*** ,Vol-IV,No.131/1916.

cupboard with a gold handle.¹⁵ The gift of jewelry was not only made to beautify the icons but also to enrich the treasure of the temple. Gifts of gold and silver were important honors for temples in Tamil Nadu, and payments from gifts of gold and silver were reliable, but income from temple lands was unreliable due to floods and droughts. In this way, the temple's supply of gold and silver increased its economy, and prestige.¹⁶ Several records prove that gold and silver were donated for various purposes. Gold donations range from 1 Kalanju to 10,000 Kalanju of gold. An inscription from Kanchipuram records the Nayaks ruler donating 10,000 Kalanjus of gold in the form of a golden vase to the nearby Vishnu temple and another donating 3,000 Kalanjus to a similar temple. Another record of Vijayakampa Vikramavarman records the donation of 30 Kalanjus of gold for endless and permanent consumption in the temple. A chronological inscription at Maranjadayam records Iakkansetti's gift of 15 golden Kalanjus to consume endless light. What's interesting is that the contributor has collected a lot of gold by asking. This screams strict sponsorship intensity. Perhaps this strategy is applied to meet commitments, as is the case today.¹⁷ Donations of gold and silver were used to make decorations, buy land to build temples, and protect people from starvation.¹⁸ Various types of utensils are used for different purposes, such as to perform Pujas, prepare and offer food to the Lord and to make donation was brought into the temple by some

15. **South Indian Inscriptions** Vol-VI, No.132/1916.

16. N.Venkata Ramayyan, **Essay on the origin of South Indian Temple**, New Delhi, 1984, P.110

17. Ibid., p.112

18. T.N.Subramanian, **South Indian Temple Inscriptions**, Vol.III, Madras, 1986, P.114

people. Nayaks donated silver vases not only to Siva temples but also to Vishnu temples.¹⁹ Pots of gold and silver were offered to the gods and goddesses. Small monetary donations were made to the temple from all classes of society for lights and shopping, and the temple provided the basic necessities for the daily worship and advancement of the learned Brahmins. Monetary donations were a common expenditure on real estate, and villages raised with real money were also transformed by religion through the king and the assembly in the temple. Money was raised for various purposes and at various events. Bounties held an important place among temple awards.²⁰ Monetary donations were used to support the temple's Brahmins, lovers, and the constant light that sustains the divine breath of God. It was cash, regardless of status, that donors used to give awards to temples and for other altruistic purposes.²¹ There are accounts depicting clothing and temple ornaments worn by individuals of various classes. The kings of this era seem to wear basic styles. The common way of royal attire apparently consisted of a dhoti, angava and hat. The dhoti was made of fine fabrics, silk and palisade and was worn during the Panchkakkam festival. The crown was either the Hai Vijayanagar type or a traditional head or sometimes a turban. A vast array of jewelry was worn: earrings, collars, shoulder ornaments, bangles, wrist ornaments, rings, stays, anklets, and two rings. The clasp is folded and gently disturbed starting at the waist.²²

19. T.N.Subramanian, ***South Indian Temple Inscriptions***, Vol.III, Madras, 1986, P.114

20. Ibid., p.112

21. D.Devakunjari, ***Madurai Through the Ages***, Madurai, 2004, P.196.

22. Ibid., p.198

There were also some rulers like Krishnappa Nayak under the sweater. Most rulers wore their hair comfortably brushed and tied in a large bun, but some had their hair beautifully plated and decorated with flowers. Nevertheless, every ruler wears the jewels Chandraprabham and Suryaprabham on his head. In addition to wearing, other small jewelry is also worn in the ears. A conspicuous piece of jewelry worn around the neck is worn by Telugu women for parties, marriage circles. Comparing it to the Tamil Thirumangalyam or Thali, we see a variety of examples including bracelets, arm ornaments, anklets, and finger and foot rings.²³ Donation of paddy or paddy to temples was a widespread practice among early individuals. They were basically given to temples with the end goal of promoting sacred foods. The support of endless lights, brahmins and lovers, and rice made the contributors understand that they must use the enthusiasm of these terms for charity. The temple received donations of various types of food and grain.²⁴ An incredible amount of food was donated over the holidays. At this time, food grains were provided directly to meet the rapid demand of the temple, sometimes the representatives were given food, and some inscriptions specifically mention Brahmans as workers and non-Brahman representatives with food grains was stated to have been provided.²⁵ If no land was distributed as compensation in any case, then the gift of a rice pension and a portion of the daily food offered to God would form the wage, or the house premises and a portion of the food provided

23. **South Indian Inscriptions**, Vol. XII, No. 1051/1927.

24. **South Indian Inscriptions**, Vol. XII, No. 55/1927

25. D. Devakunjari, **Madurai Through the Ages**, Madurai, 2004, P. 196.

would form the wage. Together, they formed the full amount of wages. The rewards of these separate things for the light and maintenance or strengthening of the Brahmanas or for the upkeep and upkeep of the Brahman or for the recitation of the Mahabharata should not be allocated or spent on one another. However, it should only be used for the reasons suggested. Donations of vessels also held a special place among the various donations to temples. The different types of vessels made of gold, silver, copper and zinc mentioned in the carvings are Laligai, Kaichoram, Palli Thalam, Kai Kattigai and Manavathil. The engraving states that a silver vessel weighing about 317 karanju was donated to the temple at Takkokham.²⁶ Some records show that sheep, dairy cows, eggs, and wild cattle were donated, which were considered important assets such as land and gold. They are talented and usually use lights. In contrast to other charitable purposes, the gift of temple cows to support the lights came to the fore. This represents about 90 percent of the total donations donated to the temple. Usually cow gifts were made for one or two lights. However, in some cases he would present most of the lamp or his quarter of the lamp.²⁷ In most cases, the quantity and need for lights was clearly stated. For example, the records of Aparajitavarman record the donation of 100 sheep for the consumption of temple lights, and the records of Kulasekaran record the donation of 32 dairy animals and bulls for the light are listed. Most of these cattle were usually left to pastoralists.²⁸ Donate wild cows, bulls,

26. ***South Indian Inscriptions***, Vol.IV, No.131/1916.

27. A.R.E, No.181/1912.

28. ***South Indian Inscriptions***, Vol.IV, No.255/1927.

sheep and other creatures to keep the temple lights on and provide donations. This is a record of Sattanammai donating a cow to eat the sheep of Senji Temple. A cow supplies milk to the early morning shower temple of Venugopalaswamy temple.²⁹ Encouraging Brahmins was considered an inalienable duty. This is accomplished by using gifts made for this purpose to encourage Brahmins, in addition to their daily assistance, and on specific occasions and celebrations, on full moon days and Thiruvadhirai days. To strengthen the Brahmins, officials gave them temple grounds and the Brahmins stayed in the temple until late in the morning.³⁰ The donation was made to the temple Gunararia Yaperumakkar on receipt of one amount and his four installments. Then, a one and a half year guarantee and a portion of the Rand family will be invested in the village by Nayaks.

The Nayaks of Madurai apart from their manifold activities on temples, were also known for bestowed charities and endowments to temples. Though, most of the rulers, focused their attention on the Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple at Madurai, they were not only confined to their activities to a particular zone but were concentrated on all temples of their kingdom.³¹ Temples at Srirangam, Rameswaram, Chidambaram, Tiruchenkodu, Srivilliputtur, Krishnapuram, Jambukesvaram, Samayavaram, Madurai, Tinnevely, Aruppukottai, Dharmapuri, Thirukkoshthiyur (Tiruppattur), Ambasamudram, Sivasailam, Srivaikuntham, Devikapuram, Arrni and Alvarkurichchi,

29. ***South Indian Inscriptions***, Vol.IV, No.255/1927.

30. ***South Indian Inscriptions***, Vol.XIX, No.309/1927.

31. D.Devakunjari, ***Madurai through the Ages***, Madurai, 2004, pp.190 to 216.

Tiruttarakosamangai, Palani, Nanguneri near Tinnevely, Kayattani, Kanyakumari and Suchindram etc., received their patronage. Thus almost all the popular temples from Salem, Coimbatore, Arcot and Dharmapuri region in the North and to Cape Comorin in the South including the Western Ghats, which were included in their vast kingdom, were beautified, renovated, extended and revived of its glory structurally and functionally. The Nayak kings renovated and extended the complex of Meenakshi temple Madurai.³² Thirumalai Nayak made endowments, renovated and constructed Mandapams and gave valuable jewels embedded with precious stones to Goddess Meenakshi and a silver throne to God Sundareswarar.³³ He also donated a gold Kavacha, coated and studded with gems to goddess Meenakshi. He also renewed the golden flag staff with gold in Meenakshi Temple and made endowments to both Vaishnavaites and Saivaites temples at Madurai.³⁴ Thirumalai Nayak granted presents, gifts and endowments to popular temples, of his period, in the form of valuable jewels, ornaments, and beautiful clothes, to adorn the deities and his presents still in use at these temples.³⁵ His numerous charities and gifts to temples set down in the inscriptions and other records, prove his generosity and selflessness.³⁶ The Madurai temple still preserves the valuable jewellery of the Nayaks and the most awe inspiring one was the crowns, made of gold and set with

32. D.Devakunjari, ***Madurai through the Ages***, Madurai, 2004, p.112

33. T.V. Mahalingam and K. Palaniappan, ***The Great Temple of Madurai***, Madurai, 1963, p.91.

34. A.R.E., Madras, 21 of 1984 and 391 of 1912.

35. D. Devakunjari, op.cit., p.254.

36. V. Rengacharya, ***A Topographical List of the Inscriptions of Madras Presidency***, pp.1615 to 1618.

precious gems, usually called Navaratna or nine gems. Of the two crowns, one was a golden turban set with gems called, ratnachummadu which was used during the festival called Puttu Thiruvila, one among the 64 Thiruvilayadal or the sacred Art activities of Lord Shiva, was celebrated annually at this temple.³⁷ Along with the turban, a golden basket and a spade were also used in this festival. The another golden crown was called Mitturudrakshakirita, which is studded with parallel rows of pearls and nedrakasha intersperced with gems.³⁸ Thirumalai Nayak presented the pearl turban or Muthu Talaipakai to God Sundareswarar and pearl crown to goddess Meenakshi, which are made of gold and intricately worked with gems and pearls of impressive size and shape. It was during the Chithirai festival, on the day of celestial wedding, the deities are adorned with these crowns annually. He also offered gold ornaments and gold idol of God Sundareswarar, in 3230 grams and gold idol of Goddess Meenakshi in 1960 grams and a gold sceptre in 670 grams.³⁹ The names of the jewels and ornaments donated by him, were Nelanaga patakkam, Kutirai Vahanatalai, Mudipagai, Ratinagondai, Kudirai ratina Angavadi, Virakondai, Erutalaipatchi padakkam, Ratina surya kandi pu, Rathinavendayam, Nagar oddiyanam, Tirukkalyanamudi, Kusandara padakkam, Durai padakkam, Sanguchakra padakkam, Ratina sengol, Pallayaran, Kalanji, Sorna kumba and Pavalakkodi malai.⁴⁰ All these jewels were embedded with precious

37. K.Devaraj, ***Theriyatha Madurai Seithigal*** (in Tamil), Madurai, 1980, p.16.

38. A.K. Paranthamanar, ***Madurai Nayakkar Varalaru*** (in Tamil), Chennai, 1966, p.220.

39. Ibid., p.232

40. M. Thangavel Desikar, ***Maduraikkoil Aparanankal*** (Tamil), Madurai, 1974, pp.226

stones like rubies, diamonds, sapphires, emeralds and pearls. It was during the time of Thirumalai Nayak the gold sceptre, set with gems, received, great worship and adoration, because it marked the rule of Goddess Meenakshi over the kingdom. So, on the eighth day of the Chithirai festival, Thirumalai Nayak, used to receive this sceptre from Goddess Meenakshi and carried the same to his palace with royal procession and placed it on the royal throne and offered special worship.⁴¹ The very same religious practice on that festival day, was continued by the successors of Thirumalai Nayak. The mural painting at Kilikuttumandapam at Meenakshi temple portrayed this picture of Queen Mangammal receiving the royal sceptre along with her royal paraphernalia. The very same sceptre, which was used in those royal festivals, was preserved in the temple and is still in use in Chithirai festival. Now this sceptre is received by the temple trustee, who goes in procession with priests, musicians and devotees, around the prakarams of the temple and finally places it before the deity Goddess Meenakshi.⁴² Thirumalai Nayak, also gave Muthupakikondai to the Vishnu temple at Alwartirunagari, in Tinneveli District.⁴³ It was during the reign of the Nayaks, fabulous jewellery which were five specimens of art, not only for their variety but also for their beauty, were gifted to temples at Alagarkovil, Tirupparankundram, Srivilliputtur, Alwartirunagari, Srirangam and Tiruchendur.⁴⁴ Thirumalai

41. Burton Stein (ed.), ***South Indian Temples – An Analytical Reconstruction, New Delhi***, 1978.p.221

42. Das, R.K., ***Temples of Tamilnadu***, Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Bombay, 1964.p.124

43. Jagadisa Ayyar, P.V., ***South Indian Shrines***, Madras, 1992.p.95

44. Jeannine Auboyer, ***Sri Ranganathaswamy – A Temple of Vishnu in Srirangam***, Trichy, 1969.p.56

Nayak, offered a gold plated throne, an ivory worked car a huge wooden car, and a throne set with rubies to the deity Goddess Meenakshi.⁴⁵ He also gifted land with an income of 44,000 pon for the daily worship and tax free villages for the temple priests and servants on the banks of river Vaigai from Alanganallur to Valayankulam. He also used to offer 1000 pon, as Kannikkai in the Hundiya during his visit to temple, as offerings to deity.⁴⁶ Thirumalai Nayak arranged for free feeding food or Annadhanam in the temple premises. Ashta Sakthi Mandapam was built by his wives Rudrapati Ammal and Tholi Ammal for feeding the pilgrims, at Meenakshi Temple. The Paradesis or wandering mendicants, were provided with free food in Madurai. He also donated two copper images of Dwarapalakas, palipida and flag staff in gold.⁴⁷ The golden Vimana, an ivory palanquin were his remarkable contributions to the Alagarkovil temple. Rani Mangammal, the first great female ruler of Madurai, liberally donated lands, gifts and ornaments to temples. She also built choultries at Madurai, Cholavandan, Srivilliputhur and Trichinopoly and donated lands for feeding the people through these choultries. These choultries were named Mangammal Chatiram or Choultry or Amma Mandapam.⁴⁸ The choultry at Cholavandan was built by her in 1695 A.D., for feeding the pilgrims who come from Kasi

45. K.Devi Booma, **Nayakkarkula Sadankukalum, Marapukalum** (Tamil), an unpublished M.Phil., thesis,, Madurai, 1999, p.2.

46. Rajaram, K., **History of Thirumalai Nayak**, Madurai, 1982.p.124

47. Ramaswamy, N.S., **Madurai Minakshi Symphony in Stone**, Madurai, 1977.p.143

48. Vedachalam, V. and Bose, **Thirumalai Mannar Kaiyedu**, Tamilnadu Government Archaeological Research Department, Chennai, 1995.p.342

to Rameswaram.⁴⁹ In order to maintain this choultry, she endowed villages, namely Kattakulam, Nandigundu, Puliankulam, Vellangulam, Mannaginaru, Kariappatty, Chinnakadambankulam and Karukuvaipatty and along with these villages, two Karaais of wet lands in Cholavandan were given to conduct free feeding charity at this choultry.⁵⁰ Choultries were put under Akdhars and the Akdhar of Cholavandan choultry, Akshava Sastrigal was endowed with a copper plate grant by her. This grant was made at Srirangam, on the banks of river Kaveri.⁵¹ She, along with the donations to Srirangam temple, gave a huge treasure, which was consisted of seven kinds of jewels, for adorning the deity, each kind of jewel on every day to the seven days of the week, and also donated number of vessals to perform pooja.⁵² During the regime of Rani Mangammal, she gave lot of donations to temples and public charity. She constructed many public buildings and seeded many trees on the roads. She repaired the chatrams and gave lands for a feeding institution. The palace at Trichy is a living monument of her. She provided donations to Srirangam temple and offered a huge treasure which was consisting of seven kinds of jewels for the seven days of the week and many gold vessels for puja. She made lands to Muslim Darga at Trichy and baba Darga at Penukonda.⁵³ The inscriptions of Vijayaranga

49. Guide and **History of Sri. Andal Temple**, Srivilliputhur, Published by Sri Nachiyar Devasthanam, Srivilliputhur, 1971.p.79

50. Na.Parthasarathy, **Rani Mangammal**, 2017, Chennai, p.89

51. Aruniappan, S., **Srirangam – The Paradise on Earth**, Trichy, 1987,p.124

52. Jeannine Auboyer, **Sri Ranganathaswamy – A Temple of Vishnu in Srirangam**, Trichy, 1969.p.234

53. Ibid., p.271

Chokkanatha Nayak revealed his grants and gifts to temples and charities. He gave several villages, namely, Elambur, Rahmatpur, Anaikatti, Nelliambalam and Lakshmipur to a mosque in Tinnevely. Once in two years, he moved with large gathering of scholars, musicians and devotees to holy places of his kingdom and temples at Madurai, Trichinopoly, Jambukesvaram, Srirangam, Tinnevely, Alvar Tirunagari and Srivaikundam and announced gifts and grants.⁵⁴ He reported such donations to these temples during his frequent visits to them. Like him, his wife, Rani Meenakshi too donated to temples and Muslim Dargas at Trichinopoly.⁵⁵ The poligars offered huge sums as charities to improve the irrigation facilities of the people. In order to ensure the supply of water they dug tanks and wells. They liberally made gifts and endowments to the temples under their jurisdiction. The poligars considered the maintenance of public charity as the essential function of the state. The contribution of charities and endowments and their due patronage to its administration and festivals were obstacles and hardship to Christian missionaries, in their attempt in conversion and propagation.⁵⁶ Many of the gifts and rich presents like ornaments of Thirumalai Nayak, were still in use at Madurai, Alagarkovil temples.⁵⁷ King Thirumalai Nayak donated a drum to Sri Andal Temple called Nagara and in order to know the announcement of poojas, performed at Andal Temple, Srivilliputhur, he built several Nagara Mandapams from

54. S. Sambasivam, ***Maanagar Madurai*** (in Tamil), Madurai, 1960, p.27.

55. Robert Sewell, ***Lists of Antiquities***, Vol.II, Madras, 1882 and 1884. p.203.

56. J.Betrend, ***La Mission du Madure***, Vol. IV, 1847, p.54.

57. D.Devakunjari, op.cit., p.254

Srivilliputur to Madurai.⁵⁸ The religious endowments of Thirumalai Nayak to Madurai temple were immense. Some of the ornaments donated by him and the details about its weight and decorative materials are furnished below. 1. Crown 830 grams of gold (83 tolas) 324 rubies 116 diamonds 3 sapphires 2 emeralds 694 pearls 2 lapis lazulis 2. Gold idol for Meenakshi 1960 grams of gold (196 tolas) Found at Swing Mandapam in the evening of every Friday 3. Gold idol of Sundaraswarar 3230 grams of gold Found at Swing Mandapam in the evening of every Friday 4. A necklace made of sapphires called Neela Naga Pathakkam 210 grams of gold (25 tolas) 10 gems 2 rubies 1 lapis lazuli 5. Sceptre 670 grams of gold (14 tolas) 761 rubies 21 diamonds 269 emeralds 44 pearls 74 lapis lazulis. These ornaments are still in use at this temple during festive occasions.⁵⁹ Their charities and endowments not only boosted religious fervour but also promoted jewellery art and ornamentation and thereby many artisans got opportunity to express their skill and earn lot and thereby improve their economic status in the society.⁶⁰ Nayak rulers gave significant gems installed with valuable stones to goddess Meenakshi and a silver honoured position to god Sundareswarar.⁶¹ Thirumalai Nayak gave a gold Kavacha, covered and studded with pearls to goddess Meenakshi. He additionally reestablished the brilliant banner staff with gold in Meenakshi Temple and made enrichments to both Vaishnavite and Saivaite Temples.⁶² Thirumalai Nayak conceded presents, blessings and

58. Palaniappan, K., ***The Great Temple of Madurai***, Madurai, 1970.p.78

59. M.Thangavel Desikar, ***Maduraikkoil Aparanankal*** (Tamil), Madurai,1974, pp.226

60. Ibid., p.228

61. Vijayaghunathan, T., ***The Great Temple of Madurai***, Madurai, 2002.p.234

62. Ibid., p.123

enrichments to prevalent Temples, of his period, as profitable gems, trimmings, and lovely garments, to decorate the gods and his presents still being used at these Temples.⁶³ His various philanthropies and endowments to Temples set down in the engravings and other records, demonstrate his liberality and benevolence.⁶⁴ In the Madurai Temple the profitable gems of the Nayaks and the most spectacular one was the crowns, made of gold and set with valuable pearls, normally called Navaratna or nine diamonds. There are two crowns, one was a brilliant turban set with diamonds called, Ratnachummadu which was utilized amid the celebration called Puttu Thiruvila.⁶⁵ Along with the turban, a brilliant wicker container utilized as a part of this celebration. The another brilliant crown was called Mitturudrakshakirita, which is studded with parallel columns of pearls and nedrakasha interspersed with gems.⁶⁶ Thirumalai Nayak introduced the pearl turban or Muthu Talaipakai to god Sundareswarar and pearl crown to goddess Meenakshi, which are made of gold and complicatedly worked with Jewels and pearls of noteworthy size and shape. It was amid the Chithirai celebration, upon the arrival of divine wedding, the gods are enhanced with these crowns yearly. He additionally offered gold decorations and gold symbol of god Sundareswarar, in 3230 grams and gold icon of goddess Meenakshi in 1960 grams and a gold staff in 670 grams.⁶⁷ The names of the gems and

63. S.Sambasivam, ***Maanagar Madurai*** (in Tamil), Madurai, 1960, p.27.

64. K.Rajaram, ***History of Thirumalai Nayak***, Madurai, 1982, p.13.

65. T.Vijayaghunathan, ***The Great Temple of Madurai***, Madurai, 2002.

66. Govindasamy Aiyar, M., ***Thirumalai Nayakkar Charitram***, Madurai, 1922.p.145

67. T.N. Subramanian, ***South Indian Temple Inscriptions (3 Vols.)***, Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, 1953-1957.p.234

adornments gave by him, were Nelanaga Patakkam, Kutirai Vahanatalai, Mudipagai, Ratinagondai, Kudirai ratina Angavadi, Virakondai, Erutalaipatchi Padakkam, Ratina Surya Kandi Pu, Rathinavendayam, Nagar Oddiyanam, Tirukkalyanamudi, Kusandara Padakkam, Durai Padakkam, Sanguchakra Padakkam, Ratina sengol, Pallayaran, Kalanji, Sorna Kumba and Pavalakkodi Malai.⁶⁸ All these gems were inserted with valuable stones like Rubies, precious stones, Sapphires, emeralds and pearls. It was amid the season of Thirumalai Nayak the gold staff, set with diamonds, got, extraordinary love and reverence, since it denoted the govern of goddess Meenakshi over the kingdom. Along these lines, on the eighth day of the Chithirai celebration, Thirumalai Nayak, used to get this staff from goddess Meenakshi and conveyed the same to his castle with regal parade and put it on the imperial position of royalty and offered uncommon worship.⁶⁹ The extremely same religious practice on that celebration day, was proceeded by the successors of Thirumalai Nayak.⁷⁰ The wall painting at Kilikuttu mandapam at Meenakshi Temple depicted this photo of Queen Mangammal getting the illustrious staff alongside her imperial gear. The exceptionally same staffs, which was utilized as a part of those imperial celebrations, was safeguarded in the Temple is still being used in Chithirai celebration.⁷¹ Presently this staff is gotten by the Temple trustee, who runs in parade with

68. Valayapettai, Ra. Krishnan, ***The Great Temple of Madurai***

Meenakshi Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, Madurai, 2014, p.45.

69. K.Rajayyan,, ***History of Madurai, 1736-1801***, Madurai 1974, P.18.

70. Kumara Guruparar, ***Madurai Meenakshiammai Pillai Tamil***, Madras, 1950.P.220

71. Ibid., p.228

clerics, performers and aficionados, around the Prakarams of the Temple lastly puts it before the divinity goddess Meenakshi. Thirumalai Nayak, additionally offered Muthupakikondai to the Vishnu Temple at Alvartirunagari, in Tinneveli District.⁷² It was amid the rule of the Nayaks, remarkable jewellery which were workmanship, for their assortment as well as for their magnificence, were talented to Temples at Alagarkovil, Tirupparankundram, Srivilliputtur, Alwartirunagari, Srirangam and Tiruchendur.⁷³ Thirumalai Nayak, offered a gold plated position of royalty, an ivory worked auto 93 a gigantic wooden auto, and a honored position set with rubies to the divinity Goddess Meenakshi.⁷⁴ Thirumalai Nayak, gave land with a pay of 44,000 pon for the everyday expenditure and tax exempt villages for the Temple clerics and hirelings on the banks of Vaigai from Alanganallur to Valayankulam. He additionally used to offer 1000 pon, as Kanikkai in the Hundiya amid his visit to Temple, as offerings to deity.⁷⁵ Thirumalai Nayak masterminded free sustaining nourishment or Annadhanam in the Temple premises. Ashta Sakthi Mandapam was worked by his spouses Rudrapati Ammal and Tholi Ammal for sustaining the explorers, at Meenakshi Temple. The Paradesis or meandering homeless people were sans given nourishment in Madurai. He likewise gave two

72. Pandithuraiathevar, P. (ed.), **Maduraithala Varalaru**, Madurai, 1928.P.123

73. Burton Stein (ed.), **South Indian Temples – An Analytical Reconstruction**, New Delhi, 1978.P.98

74. Devakunjari, D., **Madurai Through the Ages (From the early time to 1801 A.D)**, Madurai, 2004,P.234

75. Kuppusami Sastri, **A Short History of the Telugu Nayak Princes**, Madras, 1948.P.67

copper pictures of Dwarapalakas, Palipida and signal staff in gold.⁷⁶ The brilliant Vimana, an Ivory palanquin were his momentous commitments to the Alagarkovil Temple. Rani Mangammal, the primary awesome female leader of Madurai, generously gave grounds, blessings and trimmings to Temples. She additionally manufactured choultries at Madurai, Cholavandan, Srivilliputhur and Tiruchirappalli and gave lands for bolstering the general population through these choultries.⁷⁷ These choultries were named Mangammal Chatiram or Choultry or Amma Mandapam. The Choultry at Cholavandan was worked by her in 1695 C.E. for nourishing the explorers who originate from Kasi to Rameswaram.⁷⁸ So as to keep up this Choultry, she supplied villages, in particular Kattakulam, Nandigundu, Puliankulam, Vellangulam, Mannaginaru, Kariappatty, Chinnakadambankulam and Karukuvaipatty and alongside these villages, two Karais of wet grounds in Cholavandan were given to direct free sustaining philanthropy at this Choultry.⁷⁹ Mangammal revived the tradition of distributing free food or annadhanam to pilgrims or devotees and for that purpose, they constructed innumerable choultries and chatrams and one such choultry of Rani Mangammal still speaks about her glory at Madurai is located now just opposite to Railway Junction. Even in temples, they constructed kitchens called madapalli and also mandapams for feeding

76. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., ***Thirumalai Naik, The Portuguese and the Dutch***, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Volume 16.P.453

77. Muthukonar, M., ***Varalatra Yedugalil Madurai***, Madurai, 1974.P.54

78. Vedachalam, V. and Bose, ***Thirumalai Mannar Kaiyedu***, Tamilnadu Government Archaeological Research Department, Chennai, 1995.P.78

79. Menon, K.K., ***Madurai Sri. Meenakshi Sundareswarar*** – Mahakumbabisheka Souvenir, Madurai, 1963.P.121

pilgrims. It was during the reign of Thirumalai Nayak, Asta sakthi mandapam in Meenakshi temple, was constructed by Rudrapathi Ammal and Tholiammal, the royal queens of Thirumalai Nayak.⁸⁰ Rani Mangammal, the most benevolent female ruler of Nayak lineage, constructed Asthana mandapam at Tirupparankundram temple, in order to supply free food.⁸¹ Even now, during the days of festivals and auspicious religious functions, the Hindus observe the tradition of providing food or annadhanam to the poor and needy. The Nayak rulers gave a strong stimulus to habitation by encouraging agriculture, exploring cultivable lands from the denudation of forests, granting lands for hamlets and by providing all facilities such as digging reservoirs called ponds or kulams, constructing roads, temples and agraharas, their kingdom was reclaimed to civilized ways. Moreover the portrait sculpture of Rani Mangammal at Thirupparankunram and at nagara mandapam, Meenakshi temple, reveal that even the widow could wear ornaments and costly dresses.⁸² The choultries are used for charity and pilgrims use them as rest houses. The choultry of Rani Mangammal at Trichy on the river bank of Kaveri at Srirangam, is called Amma mandapam which is now used for the celebration of Thirthavari festival of Srirangam Temple.⁸³ Another choultry of Rani Mangammal at Madurai has six blocks and the first four blocks are allotted to all caste people, the fifth one was for

80. Meenatchiyamman Koil Sasanam, Oriental manuscripts Library, Madras, 1941.p.57

81. Balaram Iyer.T.G.S ***History and Description of Sri Meenakshi Temple***,Madurai, 2006,p.123

82. Burlsen.J.V ***Nayaker Kingdom in Madurai*** ,IV,Bombay, 1973,p.231.

83. Chitralkha Singh, Premnath, ***Hindu Festivals, Fairs and Fasts*** New Delhi, 1999.p.127

Brahmins and the sixth one was for Muslims who built a Mosque on that place which is still there in the East Veli Street, opposite to railway junction.⁸⁴ The royal queens of Thirumalai Nayak too had built a building for distribution of free food at Meenakshi Temple, called Asta Sakthi mandapam.⁸⁵ The Nayak rulers are still remembered and cherished in the minds of the people of Madurai, Srivilliputhur, Srirangam and Tinnevely mainly, due to their contributions. Choultries were put under Akdhars and the Akdhar of Cholvandan Choultry, Akshava Sastrigal was supplied with a copper plate concede by her. This allows was made at Srirangam, on the banks of stream Kaveri. She, alongside the gifts to Srirangam Temple, gave a gigantic fortune, which was comprised of seven sorts of gems, for enhancing the divinity, every sort of gem on consistently to the seven days of the week, and furthermore gave number of vessals to perform puja.⁸⁶ The engravings of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayak uncovered his awards and endowments to Temples and charities.⁸⁷ He gave a few villages, in particular, Elambur, Rahmatpur, Anaikatti, Nelliambalam and Lakshmipur to a Mosque in Thirunelveli. Once in two years, he moved with expansive social event of researchers, artists and enthusiasts to sacred spots of his kingdom and Temples at Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Jambukesvaram, Srirangam, Thirunelveli, Alvar Tirunagari and Srivaikundam and declared blessings and

84. Lasrad Shenoy. J.P **Madura: The Temple City**, Madurai, 1939.p.231

85. Rajaram. K **History of Thirumalai Nayak** , Madurai, 1982.,p.121

86. Srinivasan. K.R **Temples of South India**, New Delhi, 1972.p.157

87. South Indian Inscriptions, Vols V, Oriental Manuscripts,
Series, Madras, 1932,p.57

to them. Like him, his better half, Rani Meenakshi too gave to Temples and Muslim Dargahs at Tiruchirappalli.⁸⁸ Many of the blessings and rich presents like adornments of Thirumalai Nayak, were still being used at Madurai, Alagarkovil Temples.⁸⁹ King Thirumalai Nayak gave a drum to Sri Andal Temple called Nagara and keeping in mind the end goal to know the declaration of pujas, performed at Andal Temple, Srivilliputhur, he fabricated a few Nagara Mandapams from Srivilliputur to Madurai.⁹⁰ The religious gifts of Thirumalai Nayak to Madurai Temple were enormous. These adornments are still being used at this Temple amid happy events. Their philanthropies and enrichments helped religious intensity as well as advanced gems workmanship and ornamentation and in this way numerous craftsman inspired chance to express their aptitude and gain parcel and in this way enhance their financial status in the general public.⁹¹ The Nayaks of Madurai were not the descendants of Tamil origin. But they were capable of retaining the traditions of the natives and maintaining the glory of the Tamilnadu. Without meddling with the existing traditions, the Nayaks introduced modifications, in aspects such as villages, charities, endowments, institutions and traditions. As such, it becomes a must to have an analysis of such facts.⁹² They maintained the native political

88. Kandasami.V **Madurai Varalarum Panpadum**, Madurai, 1981.p.192

89. ParamaShivam.T.P **Azhagar Koil**, Madurai, 1987.p.89

90. R.Jawahar, M. Selvam and P. Samynathan, **Nellaiyin Saral – Mahakumbabisheka sirappu Malar** (Tamil), Tinnevely, 2004.p.97

91. Tangavel Desikar, M., **Maduraikkovil Aparanankal**, The Madurai Temple Complex Kumbabhisheka Souvenir, Madurai, 1974.p.121

92. Rajayyan, K., **History of Madurai (1736 A.D. – 1801 A.D)**, Madurai, 1974.p.78

tradition of considering the village as the primary, fundamental and basic unit of the administrative hierarchy and as a prime structure for social activities and economic developments. In order to promote the growth of villages, they pursued a benevolent policy and encouraged emigration from Andradesa to Tamil country and donated lands and settlements to them.⁹³ They also appointed them artisans, priests, royal officials and thereby provided them with profession or occupation. As agriculture was the main occupation of the majority of the people, land was considered as the property of the government and the society, and it was utilised for constructing houses and also for raising crops for the subsistence of the masses.⁹⁴ Due to political turmoil, upheaval and instability in the Vijayanagar after the battle of Talikotta in 1565 A.D., the inflow of emigrants to Madurai increased. The Nayak kings of Madurai provided them what they needed, viz., fertile land for settlement and occupation, temples or places of worship to carry on their religious faith and a well organised system of benevolent government to promote peace and prosperity to them.⁹⁵ Such peaceful and congenial atmosphere, attracted the emigrants who thronged in large population and settled in Nayak domain, specially they inhabited in villages and so abundance of villages sprang up during that period.⁹⁶ To the priests and created Brahmin settlements which were called *agraharas*,

93. ***Thenninthiya Kovil Sasanankal*** (Tamil), Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras.p.12

94. Pandithuraiathevar, P. (ed.), ***Maduraithala Varalaru***, Madurai, 1928.p.121

95. Burton Stein (ed.), ***South Indian Temples – An Analytical Reconstruction***, New Delhi, 1978.p.231

96. S.Sambasivam, ***Maanagar Madurai*** (in Tamil), Madurai, 1960, p.27.

bramadeyams and such agraharas were called devadana in the Nayak age and the names of those villages had the suffix as Nallur and Mangalam. The epigraphical sources of the Nayak age mention not only about the grants of the kings but also about the names of the gifted villages such as Nallur etc. According to an inscription dated 1570 A.D. of Virappa Nayak, a hereditary accountant was appointed by Virappa Nayak to a temple at Adittavanama Chaturvedimangalam near Ambasamudram and another inscription of him dated 1577 A.D., he gave gifts to the temple at Krishnapuram and to the priests of that temple.⁹⁷ An inscription of Krishnappa Nayak I, found at Krishnapuram near Tinnevely dated 1563 A.D. reveal that Krishnappa Nayak granted the villages of Ariyakulam, Thiruvengadanallur, Kodikkulam, Siramankulam and Alikudi to the Temple of Krishnapuram.⁹⁸ An inscription of Visvanatha Nayak, found at Viravanallur near Ambasamudram, dated 1551 A.D. mentioned about the devadana and Brahmadeya lands in a number of villages surrounding Seranmadevi.⁹⁹ The inscription of Muthu Virappa Nayak found at Madurai, dated 1609 A.D. revealed that Nallur, surnamed Muthuviramahipala Samudram to Brahmins.¹⁰⁰ This village Nallur was located at the back of the Tirupparankundram hills and even now the lands of that village Nallur, are in possession, as a hereditary right, of the Brahmanas of Tirupparankundram Temple.¹⁰¹ These Brahmanas were the Sthanikas of the

97. A.R.E., Madras, 16 of 1914

98. Epigraphia Indica, Vol.IX, pp.328-342

99. A.R.E., Madras, 721 of 1916.

100. Inscription of the Madras Presidency Vol. III, p.96. Antiquities, Vol I, p.203.

101. Inscription of the Madras Presidency Vol.III, p.5.

Sri Murugan Temple, Tirupparankundram.¹⁰² Thus several villages in the Madurai Kingdom had the suffix Mangalam or Nallur.

The Nayak lineage of kings introduced poligar system and replaced the ancient land organisation. A new social group of aristocrat emerged in the society, as poligars, who were mostly emigrants, had Telugu and Kannada as their lingua-franca. They cleared the jungles, encouraged emigrants, constructed forts, palaces and temples and introduced several welfare measures to promote the economy.¹⁰³ But on the contrary, they brought inequality in the society, and retained their rank as upper class. Due to poligar system, majority of the peasants in the villages had been enserfed under the poligars, there emerged a social institution, called hereditary slavery in the society.¹⁰⁴ The inflow of emigrants caused the villages and towns to be crowded with these large chunk of people, whose hamlets and streets were arranged on the basis of their occupations and social status or position, which paved the way for rigidity, disparity, untouchability among the caste groups. The barbers, washermen, oddans or tank diggers, the kusavans or the potters, the sakkilians or dressers of leather materials, the dombans or the jugglers and conjurers, the sembadavans or the fishermen and the valaiyans or palanquin lifters were isolated as untouchables and serving communities in the society.¹⁰⁵ So, it

102. Burton Stein (ed.), ***South Indian Temples – An Analytical Reconstruction***, New Delhi, 1978.p.232

103. Das, R.K., ***Temples of Tamilnadu***, Bombay, 1964.

104. K.Devaraj, ***Theriyatha Madurai Seithigal*** (in Tamil), Madurai, 1980, p.42.

105. George Michael, ***The Hindu Temple***, New Delhi, 1977.p.134

brought hierarchy in the caste system and made it a common institution in the society. Besides, the upper class people, there were caste groups who had main occupations such as agriculture, and were called as Vellalars, Reddis, Goundars, Pillais, Nayakkars, Konars or Idaiyans, Ambalakarans and so on. They got settled in different streets in villages or in separate villages exclusively for their group or caste which could be known from the names of those villages as Kondamanayakkanpatty, Rediyapatty, Kamayakavundanpatty, Konarpatty which were in existence in the Theni district region.¹⁰⁶ There were social institutions and the most prevalent were sati, and devadasi system. The practice of self-immolation was prevalent but it was optional. For instance, when Chokkanatha Nayak lost his life, his wife Mangammal became the first female ruler of the Madurai Kingdom, as a regent to her grand son Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayak.¹⁰⁷ Sati or self-immolation was practiced not only by royal women in the palace and harem but also by the women of the poligars and military men. It was evident from the account of Jesuit priests, especially, the letter of Father Proenza in 1659 A.D., mentioned about the death of Thirumalai Nayak in 1659 A.D. and the occurrence of sati by the women of his harem.¹⁰⁸ Anna Muthammal, the wife of Muthukrishnappa Nayak III and the mother of Viayaranga Chokkanatha Nayak, too, committed sati.¹⁰⁹ It was during the wars of Ramappaiya, the

106. Kundril Kumar, ***Managar Madurai Andrum Indrum***, Madurai, 2009.P.213

107. Viridhagirisani.V ***The Nayaks of Tamil Nadu*** ,IX Annamalai University Historical series No.3, Chidambaram, 1942,p.123

108. K.Rajaram,***Social and cultural history of Madurai***,Madurai, p.199.

109. Karuppiah.K ***Varalathru Parvayil Madurai*** ,Madurai, 2006,P.123

army men, Vanni, Alagar and Kumaran lost their life and so their wives committed sati.¹¹⁰ A sati stone was found near a hill at Uthappanayakkanur, a erstwhile headquarter of that palayam, which mentioned about the sati, committed by Venkatamma, the wife of the poligar, Sappanithurai, the contemporary of Thiurmalai Nayak.¹¹¹ Sati or self immolation was accepted as a social institution by the Nayak rulers and their subjects. Another institution was the marriage. The system of giving dowry and the observance of strict rigid ceremonies were in vogue. The statues of the deities in the celestial wedding form, carved on pillars of the mandapams of the Nayaks, reveal the marriage function and the ceremonies.¹¹² The Chithirai festival functions which were started by Thirumalai Nayak, indicated about the marriage ceremonies, customs and traditions of the Nayak age. Even now there was a custom, among the Brahmins and the Nayakkars, who wore two thalis or Mangala pottu in the sacred thread which were tied by the bridegroom to the bride on that wedding function.¹¹³ The existence of royal harem was revealed from the accounts of Jesuit priest, John Nieuhoff and Father Proenza.¹¹⁴ This hoary native institutions of polygamy, royal harem and concubinage were revived during the Nayak age and they were prevalent among the higher circles. Muthu Virappa Nayak III was unique among the Nayaks, observed monogamy, and dispensed with royal harem, but all the others, encouraged

111. Muthukonar, M., **Varalatra Yedugalil Madurai**, Madurai, 1974.p.128

112. Pulavar Sambasivanar, S., **Maanagar Madurai**, Madurai, 1974.p.167

113. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., **Thirumalai Naik**, The Portuguese and the Dutch, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Volume 16.p.22.

114. Robert Sewell, **List of Antiquities**, Vol.II, Madras, p.268.

polygamy and had a harem.¹¹⁵ A notable social institution, called Devadasi system got due recognition and encouragement from the Nayak kings. It was during the reign of King Thirumalai Nayak, the lover of art and architecture this Devadasi system, was accepted by all as a social tradition. The dancing women, in the festivals and ceremonies of the temples, were called Devadasis. They were donated to temples and were considered servants of God.¹¹⁶ They were famous for their range of religious knowledge, the lustre of beauty, the charm of voice and skill in dance and music and handling of musical instruments like guitar and veena with perfection.¹¹⁷ Among the dancing girls and Devadasis, there were masters, who were very skilled in their art, would direct the band of dancing girls in the ceremonies of the temples and its festivals as well as in the palace of the King.¹¹⁸ These dancing girls were attached to temples and so temples had such harem, which attracted the notice of the foreign travellers like Andre Freire, who mentioned in his letter, that a dancing girl was a notable women of manly courage belonged to Tenkasi.¹¹⁹ The Nayak kings gave gifts and presents to them. To promote fine arts in the religious institutions and its festivals, which was essential for propagation of religious philosophy through dance, the most important form of religious awakening of this period, Devadasis or dancing girls were attached to the temples. So to provide food, dress,

115. Manohar Devadoss, ***Enathu Madurai Ninaivugal***, Chennai, 2010. P.123

116. Parantamanar.A.K ***Thirumalai Nayakar Varalaru***, Chennai, 1973. P.98

117. Vijayaragunathan.T, ***The Great Temple of Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswararar Thirukkoil***, Madurai, 2002. P.231

118. Chandra Sekaran, T. (ed.), ***South Indian Temple Inscriptions***, Vol II, Oriental Inscription Series, Madras, 1904.

119. J.Betrend, ***La Mission du Madure***, Vol. IV, 1847, p.64.

ornaments and other needs to them, Thirumalai Nayak endowed lands. He also encouraged and patronised the Sourastras or the weavers and the Kammalars or the artisans from whom only the dancing girls hailed. So this sections of the society were given hamlets and other privileges.¹²⁰ As these dancing girls were in need of luxurious ornaments, costly silken embroidered clothes of fine variety, flowers, perfumes, betal, arecanuts and other stimulating substances, the Nayaks encouraged the cultivation of betel leaves, flowers and patronised skillfull manufacturers of silk clothes and gold smiths. The jewels, donated by king Thirumalai Nayak to Meenakshi temple, revealed about the variety, workmanship and beauty of the ornaments, manufactured in those days by the goldsmiths of the Nayak age.¹²¹ The palaces and the temples, almost all, had flower gardens or Nanthavanam. In order to maintain that, the Nayak Kings constructed ponds or Theppakulam in temples and also granted lands to these temples.¹²² Thirumalai Nayak made Madura as the festival city. Every month there were festivals, relating to Hindu Puranas like Chithirai festival, Puttu Thiruvila and festivals related to Thiruvilaiyadal Puranam, besides usual festivals on the full moon and new moon days of a month, in the Meenakshi Temple. At that juncture the performances of the dancing girls were encouraged. Dance and music performances were carried by the

120. **Madurai District Inscriptions**, Vol. II, Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, Chennai, 2008.P.156

121. Govindasamy Aiyar, M., **Thirumalai Nayakkar Charitram**, Madurai, 1922.P.123

122. Muthukonar, M., **Varalatra Yedugalil Madurai**, Madurai, 1974.P.85

Devadasis in the temple.¹²³ Folk arts like Kummi, Kollattam or Pasavanna were executed. Even now such dances are common not only in Madurai temple festival but also in Tirupati temple Brahmorchava festival. These dances were executed by Devadasis, but now they are carried out by devotees. So, the religious tradition of performing dances during festival days, are still in vogue.¹²⁴ To provide, recreation, entertainment and amusement to people, the kings, arranged festivals with dance and music. In order to perform that regularly, occupational dancing girls were encouraged, patronised and attached to temples. These professional dancing girls were very much respected and protected on those days. Even the most magnificent, marvellous secular building, his great palace at Madurai, had a splendid hall, called Natakasala or Theatre.¹²⁵ This theatre or dance hall was used by King and his queens, guests and chieftains to witness dances in the evenings, performed by dancing girls, well versed in those arts.¹²⁶ Still this hall with its original architectural beauty, renders feast to vision and brain of the tourists who visit the palace. This hall, had sculptures of women dancers, musicians with musical instruments and deities in a beautiful and decorative manner. Numerous types of musical instruments

123. Vedachalam, V. and Bose, ***Thirumalai Mannar Kaiyedu***, Tamilnadu Government Archaeological Research Department, Chennai, 1995.P.234

124. S.Sambasivam, ***Maanagar Madurai*** (in Tamil), Madurai, 1960, p.27.

125. Durvedi, V.P., ***A Portrait of Thirumalai Nayak on two brass door – jams***, Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri Felicitation Volume, Felicitation Committee, Madras, 1971.P.123

126. Paranthamanar, A.K., ***Madurai Nayakkarkalum, Koyil Thiruppanikalum***, The Madurai Temple Complex Kumbabhisheka Souvenir, Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareswarar Tirukkovil, Madurai, 1974.P.67

such as Veena, Udukkai, Melam, Tharai, Murusu, Guitar, Nadasuram, Damaram, Mathalam etc., are depicted in the sculptures. In one of the literary works of Nayak age, Ramappaiyan Ammanai, mentions about 18 types of musical instruments.¹²⁷ It was also notable that there was a street in front of the palace, called Navapadkhana street, where music performers of 18 types of musical instruments were housed, during the time of Thirumalai Nayak. Thirumalai Nayak directed, Vadamalaiyappapillai, the administrator of Tinnevely to reclaim and install the statue of God Muruga of Thiruchendur which was thrown into sea by the Dutch and accordingly that temple regained its sanctity and sacredness as the holy abode of God Muruga where Kirthanam, a new style of Tamil poem, was written and sang in front of that deity at the time of its installation in 1654 A.D.¹²⁸ Since then, it was made as a tradition to sing hymns of Devaram and Nalayira Diviya Prabandam, known for their style and music rhythms, in the Temples of the Nayak territory. The musicians who sang these songs at temples were known as Othuvars. Ramappaiyyan, the minister and Dalavay of Thirumalai Nayak invited the trained musicians, who were well-versed in Devaram hymns, from Kumbakonam to Palani Murugan temple and appointed them Othuvars of that temple.¹²⁹ He made them hereditary musicians of that temple and gave them grant of lands and gifts to them and still their family

127. Vaiyapuri Pillai. S, **Ramappayyan Ammanai**, Madras University, Madras, 1951.p.234

128. Vedhachalam.V, **Thirumalai Mannar Kaiyedu**, State Department of Archaelolgy, Madras, 1995.p.156

129. Gnanasambanta Swamigal(ed.) **TevaramKumarakuruparan** Sangam, Srivaikundam, p.19

Nayak appointed the musicians of Dharmapuri in Meenakshi temple to recite Devaram hymns daily and granted them lands at Alanganallur and Palamedu and still their family members are performing the same work.¹³⁰ Thirumalai Nayak had observed the religious and political tradition of receiving the royal sceptre from Goddess Meenakshi, symbolising, that the country was ruled by Goddess Meenakshi and the Nayak king was its real administrator, as a servant or a representative of the Goddess.¹³¹ This was called sceptre festival, which was celebrated with royal pagantry during the course of the Chithirai festival. A golden royal sceptre with precious gems was donated to this temple by him and still it is there and it exhibits the glory of him at this Chithirai festival. Thirumalai Nayak offered gifts, presents and royal titles on this occasion to his commanders, chieftains, poets and other servants. The tradition observed by the Nayaks is still prevalent at Madurai.¹³² By reviving the old traditions and introducing new ones, the Nayaks contributed lot for the attainment of Hindu revivalism. They attached significance to the auspicious days, notably every full moon day in a month and in those days, the city of Madurai had a look of festivity, because most of the temple festivals were celebrated on that day with great pomp and splendour.¹³³ Now a primary school of the Sourastras is

130. **South Indian Temple Inscriptions** (3 Vols.), T.N. Subramanian, Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, 1953-1957.p.234

131. **Thirumalainayakkar Cheppedukal** (Tamil), (eds.) N. Kasinathan, S. Rajagopal and V. Vedachalam, State Department of Archaeology, Madras, 1994.p.125

132. *ibid.*,

133. Vedachalam, V. and Bose, **Thirumalai Mannar Kaiyedu**, Tamilnadu Government Archaeological Research Department, Chennai-, 1995.p.245

functioning in that site. To encourage dance and music, the Nayak kings, built mandapams in temples and patronised musicians and dancers and thereby, indirectly gave room for the existence of an institution called Devadasi system in their kingdom. To promote Devadasi system, Vijaya Ranga Chokkanatha Nayak, gave grant of deed and a house to dancing girls in the Shiva Temple in Tinnevely in 1731 A.D.¹³⁴ The Telugu speaking people in the erstwhile Madurai kingdom had a tradition of growing pastures with grains and cereals, during the festivals for deities kali and mari as well as during the days of death ceremony, indicating that their main occupation was agriculture.¹³⁵ There was a common tradition to obtain the blessings of the elders before the commencement of any important duty. For instance, Ramappaiyan's brother was blessed by Ramappaiyan with betel leaves and arecanuts when he was going to war.¹³⁶ King Thirumalai Nayak had a tradition of organising Devati-Salam at his palace in Madurai. During that day, his provincial Chieftains, with their paraphernalia, gathered and accompanied the king at Rangavilasam, in his palace, where female dancers exhibited their skill before the courtiers, who gave gifts and presents.¹³⁷ It was an age old Hindu custom that one should go with some fruits or gifts, to see superiors and this orthodox etiquette was observed at Thirumalai Nayak's palace.¹³⁸ It was an ancient tradition to break a coconut before

134. ***Inscription of the Madras Presidency***, Vol, III, p.59.

135. Bursen.J.V ***Nayaker Kingdom in Madurai*** , Bombay, 1973.p.112

136. Vaiyapuri Pillai. S(com.) ***Ramappayyan Ammanai***,adras, 1951.p.213

137. T.S.Sridhar (ed), ***South Indian Inscriptions***, No.269, Chennai, 2010, P.269.

138. H.Eliot, ***History of India***, Vol.VII, Delhi, 1929, p.139

commencing any work as an auspicious ceremony. This was made and this was observed by Ramappaiyan, the Dalavay of Thirumalai Nayak, while he initiated a public work in the Nayak kingdom.¹³⁹ The inflow of Telugu immigrants to the Tamil land created a new culture with their traditions and occupations. The leather workers or the Sakilians came from Andhra country, promoted agriculture by way of using leather bags with pipes for getting well water with the use of bullocks called Kamalai and this fresh irrigation method was new to the natives.¹⁴⁰ The weavers or the Sourastra immigrants gave a new form to the art of cloth manufacturing. The Telugus gave new incentive to agriculture. They cleared the jungles and made those places, cultivable lands and to irrigate those lands, they dug canals, wells, ponds and other small reservoirs.¹⁴¹ The Telugu speaking divisions of Oddans and Kammalas evolved new forms and modes in the building art and architecture and thereby many tanks, canals and dams were built during this period. The canal from Vaigai, called Mellakkal, which is still in existence, was built by Visvanatha Nayak.¹⁴² It exhibits the traditional way of irrigation. There was a tradition, that during the Navarathri festival, the King was surrounded by all his ensigns of royalty and all his chieftains and feudatories offered homage to him. During the reign the Thirumalai Nayak, it was celebrated in a grand manner with much amusements and

139. Vaiyapuri Pillai. S(com.) **Ramappayyan Ammanai**, Madras, 1951.p.113

140. Jagadisa Ayyar.P.V, **South Indian Shrines**, New Delhi, 1983.P.45

141. Thiagarajan.K, **The Madurai Temple** (A short History) Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple,Devasthanam, Madurai.

142. Inscription of the Madras Presidency Vol III. p.58

entertainments.¹⁴³ The Nayak rulers were ardent patrons of Hinduism and so, to promote vedic learning, they continued the tradition of treating Madurai as the centre of learning for Hindu philosophy and high knowledge.¹⁴⁴ In their educational policy, they combined the religious and scientific studies but it was restricted only to Brahmins.¹⁴⁵ The Nayaks believed that a religious knowledge was essential for the promotion, creation and assimilation of arts such as music, dance and architecture. The paintings, found in the temple mandapams, of the Nayaks at Alagarkovil, Meenakshi temple Madurai and Shiva Temple, Natham, reveal the scenes of the epics like Ramayana, Mahabharatham and puranas such as Thiruvilayadal puranam and Kumarasambhava. The paintings at Shiva Temple, Natham, contains the drawings about the birth myth of Murugan, and all six padai vedu temples of Murugan along with Rameswaram and Srivilliputhur temples.¹⁴⁶ Those who visited this temple, had the satisfaction that they have seen all these temples at a time. Nayak Chieftian Lingamma Nayak of Natham palayam, brought religious harmony.¹⁴⁷ Even now the paintings of Rani Mangammal at Killikutu mandapam, near the Pottramarai kulam in the Meenakshi temple, indicate the Meenakshi Pattabhisekham,

143. A.K.Paranthamanar, **Thirumalai Nayakar Varalaru** (in Tamil), 1995, Chennai, p.89.142

144. Muthukonar, M., **Varalathru Yedugalil Madurai**, Madurai, 1974,P.133

145. Palaniappan, K., **Koyil Maanagar**, Madurai, 1963.P.123

146. Pulavar Sambasivanar, S., **Maanagar Madurai**, Valavan Veliyidu, Madurai, 1974.

147. Vedachalam, V. and Bose, **Thirumalai Mannar Kaiyedu**, Tamilnadu Government Archaeological Research Department, Chennai- 1995,P.125

the important religious ceremony.¹⁴⁸ In order to preach, teach and propagate religious morals and philosophy, the Nayaks encouraged the traditional native folk arts like silambam, a popular masculine defensive art, which was depicted in the paintings at Alagarkovil, Kolam, a popular art of decorative designs and geometrical patterns, found in the ceilings of almost all temples. Karagam was also a folk art, displayed during the village festivals by both men and women artists having the mastery of balancing one or more pots on their heads and dance to the rhythm of the music of the drummers. Another folk art was Thappattam, dance usually performed by the male members of the lower caste groups of the society. That musical instrument Tappu was made of the skin of buffalo or cow.¹⁴⁹ This dance was mostly performed, during the death ceremony of the people of upper caste groups. Another male dance, traditionally, performed by the Telugu speaking group, in village festivals, notably at the suburbs of erstwhile Kandamanayakkanur palayam, was called Devarattam,¹⁵⁰ Even now these folk arts are common,

148. Vedachalam, V. and Bose, Thirumalai Mannar Kaiyedu, Tamilnadu Government Archaeological Research Department, Chennai-, 1995.p.245

149. Thapattam is a Folk Dance of Tamil Nadu known as Paraiattam in ancient Sangam Literatures. Parai is an instrument which is used for the declaration and the proclamation of Ancient Tamil King's message and Orders to the Public. The Parai acquired the name Thappu based on the action of beating on the instrument Parai. It is an Artform of the suppressed class. Thappattam is played at each and every auspicious functions of a family like child's birth, puberty, marriages and the worship of the community deities.

150. Devarattam is a Tamil Word derived from the words "Devar" or Thevar meaning the god, king or warriors and "Attam" meaning the dance. Traditionally, it was performed by the kings and warriors after a successful battle particularly in pandyan dynasty, Later it was danced by the some group of peoples of Maravar clan belongs to mukkulathor community.

among the villagers who consider them, their traditional recreation and amusements. The Nayak kings introduced new customs and in due course they became traditional. The Nayak rulers fixed and collected taxes from each occupational group and that assisted them in promoting fine arts. Every weaver's loom, every oil-mill, every retail shop, every gatherer of wild honey, every owner of carriage bullocks and even every washerman who used stones in beds of rivers to wash off their clothes, paid taxes.¹⁵¹ It was during the festival days, in order to drag the gigantic temple cars, immense number of men from villages were utilised and this was called car service or Therr Uliyam.¹⁵² This car-service was operated by the hereditary skilled family members. Thirumalai Nayak located these skilled members and gave them the rights to do car service and thereby the kallars of Mankulam and Velliyankundram had the privilege to drag the car of Alagarkovil in the Adipuram festival and also in the Chithirai festival, at Tallakulam.¹⁵³ Like that the Kallars and their hereditary members residing at Tirupparankundram still have the right to drag the car of Murugan Temple even now.¹⁵⁴ The streets around the Srivilliputhur temple are called car streets and in the south car street, Thirumalai Nayak constructed a Palace, where now, Munsif Court and Taluk Office are functioning.¹⁵⁵ In order to move the cars, streets were laid around the temples by the Nayak rulers and

151. V.Rengacharya, ***A Topographical List of the Inscriptions of Madras Presidency, Vol.I***, Madras, 1919, p.1627.

152. D.Devakunjari, ***Madurai through the Ages***, Meenakshi Sundareswarar Thirukkoil, Madurai, 2004, p.216.

153. S.Sambasivam, ***Maanagar Madurai*** (in Tamil), Madurai, 1960, p.27.

154. Steon Burton, ***South Indian Temples***, New Delhi, 1969.p.124

155. Vengatesan. K ***Temples as Institutions of Social change***, Chennai, 2008.p.256

this public work was carried out traditionally by almost all of them. Visvanatha Nayak laid roads around the temples at Srirangam, Madurai and Tinnevely.¹⁵⁶ Thirumalai Nayak too laid roads around the temple at Sucindram and in that road he constructed a palace and now it is called Thirumalai Nayakkan Kottaram.¹⁵⁷ Thus the Nayak kings revived the religious tradition of car festival in temples. During the day of the celestial wedding of Meenakshi, the temple cars of Meenakshi temple, donated by Thirumalai Nayak, were taken in procession in the four Masi streets. As the cars or thers had freely from one Masi street to another, four Vadambokki streets were laid for that purpose. Vadam in Tamil means thick rope made by coconut fibres, and is used to drag the cars. Even now these streets are there with the same names and the temple cars would pass through these streets every year in the Tamil month of Chithirai, during the Chithirai festival. The holy festivals of this temple which fall on specific Tamil months would be performed and celebrated in those streets and this tradition is observed.¹⁵⁸ With a view to bring religious amity and tolerance, Thirumalai Nayak introduced the tradition of Lord Alagar's journey to Vandiyur to meet Tulukka Nachiyar or a Muslim devotee of him, during the course of the Chithirai festival at Madurai.¹⁵⁹ Even to day, large number of Muslims participate in the Chithirai festival at Vandiyur. In order to make the people

156. *Inscription of the Madras Presidency* Vol III. p.58.

157. Burton Stein (ed.), *South Indian Temples – An Analytical Reconstruction*, New Delhi, 1978.p.234

158. K.Devaraj, *Theriyatha Madurai Seithigal* (in Tamil), Madurai, 1980, p.196.

159. S.Sambasivam, *Maanagar Madurai* (in Tamil), Madurai, 1960, p.127.

of all castes to mingle freely with each other, this Nayak ruler made arrangements in such a manner, that each popular caste has mandapams, on the way of Alagar's journey to Madurai and they participated in that religious ceremony of ethirsevai of God Kallazhagar. Maravas and Ambalakarans and all other caste groups used to receive the Deity from Alagarkovil, in their respective mandapams and even today, the very same tradition is observed and huge crowd of devotees normally attend this festival.¹⁶⁰ Thirumalai Nayak, though allowed the activities of the missionaries he did not favour them at the cost of his subjects' loyalty.¹⁶¹ He could not control the fury of his people who were provoked due to the zeal of the converts who ridiculed the festivals, broke the idols and abused the Hindus. Hence the occurrence of religious persecution was unavoidable. In spite of that, the rule of the Nayaks, served as a ground for the growth and development of Christian missionaries, who established several churches at Madurai, Vadipatty, Trichinopoly, Sendamangalam, Tuticorin and in the eastern coastal areas.¹⁶² This was due to the continuance of substantial tolerance of the Nayak rulers, who did not check the activities of the missionaries, instead allowed them to carry on their works. As a consequence, the missionary priests left their traditions in the Madurai kingdom. The Nayaks received Portuguese artists who introduced different styles in the structural buildings.¹⁶³ The architectural style of Thirumalai

160. Kundril Kumar, ***Managar Madurai Andrum Indrum***, Madurai, 2009.p.145

161. Burton Stein (ed.), ***South Indian Temples*** – An Analytical Reconstruction, New Delhi, 1978p.23

162. Shenoy, J.P.L., Madura – ***The Temple City***, Madurai, 1937, p.24

163. ***South Indian Inscriptions***, Vol.XVII, No.595/1928.

Nayak palace was the suitable example, as it bears testimony to the influence of alien artists and artisans. The massive granite huge columns, the foliated arches in brick, the stucco reminiscent of the plaster arcades, the valuting of the roofs and the domes reveal the character of gothic building and Islamic influence of designs and structures.¹⁶⁴ The Nayak period also witnessed the tradition of ivory carvings of the portraits of royalties and Europeans which are now preserved in the Temple Museum at Srirangam. They testify to the fascinating accuracy and workmanship of the artisans and masons.¹⁶⁵ Most of the portrait statues and sculptures of the Nayak kings, queens and attendants either in stones, metals or ivory, had their hands clasped in obedience to the Almighty and this expresses their traditional method of worshipping the deities and also the traditional way of welcoming the people to temples. Such portrait stone sculptures of King Thirumalai Nayak and his consorts are found at Madurai, Tirupparankundram, Alagarkovil and Srivilliputhur.¹⁶⁶ Through traditions, they brought equality in economy and social status and left an imperishable name in their cultural activities, which are still alive and are carried out not only by the people of Madurai and but also by people in the southern part of the Tamil country. Thus the relics of the Nayaks in the form of traditions, besides splendid monuments, still radiate their contribution to the culture

164. Govindasamy Aiyar, M., ***Thirumalai Nayakkar Charitram***, Madurai, 1922.p.178

165. Kandasamy, V, ***Tamilnattin Thalavaralarukalum Panpattu Chinnankalum***, Chennai,1983.p.85

166. Muthukonar, M., ***Varalattru Yedugalil Madurai***, Madurai, 1974.p.45

of the land. They are marvellous and superb. The Nayak kings, especially king Thirumalai Nayak observed the tradition of Bhakthi cult in the form of fine arts such as music and dance, and folk arts such as Kollattam, Devarattam, Kummi and Therrukuthu, especially during the temple festivals and martial art called Divati Vandanamor Flambeans at his palace, usually in the evening of everyday.¹⁶⁷ Both male and female dancers exhibited their skill before the king and his courtiers. To provide hamlets to the dancers, Thirumalai Nayak and his Dalavay Narasappaiya, the native of the town Kuthiyargundu near Tirupparankundram, constructed hamlets, tank or reservoir and a temple in the area Kuthiyargundu.¹⁶⁸ Kuthiyars in Tamil means dancers and also concubines. The very same place and the tank still exist with the same name Kuthiyargundu and Kuthiyargundu kanmai or kulam. Most of the people of that town belonged to Isai Vellalar caste and their ancestors are notable for music and dance.¹⁶⁹ The Nayaks though Hindus, observed the religious tradition of worshipping a female deity like Sakti before commencing any work, such as declaring wars.¹⁷⁰ Moreover the Nayak rulers offered importance to religious traditions because they believed that it would regulate the behaviour of their subjects. Swing cots were used for swing festivals at Meenakshi Temple Madurai, during the period of

167. D.Devakunjari, **Madurai through the Ages**, Meenakshi

Sundareswarar Thirukkoil, Madurai, 2004, p.216

168. A.K. Paranthamanar, **Thirumalai NayakarVaralaru** (in Tamil), 1995, Chennai, p.89.

169. Kathir Murgu (com.) **Pathu Pattu-Maduraik Kanchi**, Chennai, 2009,p.37

170. Thirumalai Nayak Palace, Published by Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology, Madurai, 2000, p.127.

flair, artistic elegance, engineering skill but also is famous to glean the customs, traditions and habits of the people of that age. Thirumalai Nayak encouraged the dedicative works of the sculptors. He gave betal leaves and arecanuts to a sculptor, named Sumanthara Murthy, while he was scooping a statue in the Pudumandapam.¹⁷¹ The tradition of using betal leaves and their increasing demand lead to betal leaves cultivation around Madurai, and the laittance of vettrilai pettai or betal leaves market place in the East veli street proves that such tradition was in vogue from the times of the Nayaks and it persists even now. The Nayaks adopted the tradition of using granite black stones for the construction of temples, mandapams and even for palaces. One of the new temples, constructed during the reign of Virappa Nayaka I at Tirupparankundram was the Chokkanatha temple and it was called kal mandapam or stone building.¹⁷² He also built kambattadi mandapam and inside it, he also built nandi mandapam in a single granite stone, with beautiful decorations, sculptures and designs, found at Meenakshi Temple, Madurai.¹⁷³ The portrait sculptures of the Nayak age, reveal about the traditional hair style of the women. The hair clot or the kondai in Tamil was put on the right side of their head. The statue of saint Thilagavathi, one of the Saiva Nayanmars, installed by Thirumalai Nayak at Tirupparankundram temple, had the same style of hair clot or kondai on the right side of the head.¹⁷⁴ The political tradition of the Nayaks was to assign

171. Govindasamy Aiyar, M., **Thirumalai Nayakkar Charitram**, E.M. Gopala krishna Kone, Madurai, 1922.p.123

172. K.Palaniappan, **The Great Temple of Madurai**, Madurai, 1970, p.18.

173. S.I.I, Vol.XII, No.1051/1927.

174. Somalay Madurai Mavattam ,Vedharanyam, 1980.p.49

gifts and grants to temples in order to commemorate their victory over that territory. Thirumalai Nayak announced grants and gifts to Aladiyur Shiva Temple in 1635 A.D, in commemoration of his victory at Travancore.¹⁷⁵ They not only attract and focus the inflow of tourists but also educate and radiate the culture of the land to scholars and historians, through wonderful sculptures, paintings and decorations.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, the Nayak kings neither encouraged nor discouraged the nonHindus or the Muslims and Christians. So the Muslims had their settlements, outside the fort or Velli streets at Madurai. Even now, there are settlements of Muslims, called Kajimarpalayam near South Veli Street, Kan Palayam near East Veli Street, Mahboobpalayam near West Veli Street and Goripalayam in the north of river Vaigai, where a Muslim Darga, the earliest mosque, was constructed in 1575 A.D, during the reign of Virappa Nayak I.¹⁷⁷

Thus through traditions and institutions, the Nayak rulers retained the cultural glory of the Tamil country. The villages, charities, endowments institutions and traditions exhibit the individual nature and prowess of Nayak rulers and also their contribution to the culture of their state.

175. South Indian inscriptions.II,Vol-VI,No.132/1916.

176. South Indian inscriptions Vol-IV,No.131/1916.

177. South Indian inscriptions,Vol-XIII, No.10/1916

